FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

3 JANUARY 1985

Lebanon

A security source cited by Beirut radio disclosed that twelve Internal Security Force officers carried out "exploratory" work for the coastal road security plan on 2 January, adding that units of the Internal Security Forces would begin deploying in accordance with the plan early the following morning. In a related report, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon said that the Internal Security Forces will deploy in six locations in the Al-Kharrub region after local militias have removed mines from the main coastal road. As for the issue of kidnapped persons, whose relatives have blocked crossing points between East and West Beirut, the commander of the Phalangist Lebanese Forces called on all parties to release their captives, expressing his own side's readiness in this regard, according to the radio.

In Israel, an IDF radio commentary on the Al-Naqurah talks noted that UN Assistant Secretary General Brian Urquhart has warned Israel that UNIFIL will be disbanded if the Al-Naqurah talks end without an arrangement. However, the assessment in Jerusalem is that the talks will continue beyond 7 January because all the signs indicate that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has allowed Lebanon to present "some kind of new position" which will prevent a crisis in the talks, according to the radio. Nevertheless, in a report on Al-Asad's meeting with President Amin al-Jumayyil on 26-27 December, the clandestine Voice of the Mountain radio asserted that the Syrian leader rejected Al-Jumayyil's proposal to agree to the deployment of UNIFIL up to the Al-Awwali River because this would constitute submission to Israel.

Israel and the Palestinians

Replying to a question in the Knesset, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres made it clear that Israel is still willing to allow assassinated PLO official Fahd al-Qawasimi's body to be buried in Hebron in exchange for the return of Israel's missing soldiers, Jerusalem radio reported. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told the Knesset that Israel will agree to the transfer of Al-Qawasimi's body if the PLO provides information about the fate of the missing IDF soldiers, according to IDF radio. Meanwhile, a PLO official cited by AFP asserted that the "Black September" group which claimed responsibility for the assassination is directed by the intelligence department of the Syrian Air Force. In Damascus, a PFLP-General Command spokesman denied PLO official Hani al-Hasan's accusation that the General Command was involved in the assassination, Radio Monte Carlo reported.

Inter-Arab Affairs

King Husayn returned to Jordan after his visit to Saudi Arabia for talks on the current Arab situation and bilateral relations, Amman radio reported. Jordanian sources cited by AFP viewed Husayn's talks with King Fahd as "very important," noting that the two monarchs discussed the Iran-Iraq war, the general Middle East situation, and cooperation between Jordan and the PLO.

In a related commentary, Cairo radio indicated that Husayn's visit to Saudi Arabia was the first part of a tour of Arab countries in which he will attempt to overcome problems obstructing the convening of an Arab summit conference and pave the way for a joint Arab move on all regional issues. Expressing support for Husayn's view that the Arab League should renounce the principle of Arab unanimity in decisionmaking, the radio stressed that holding a dialogue with Syria and Libya over the PLO or Gulf issues would be a waste of time and that convening the summit conference should not be contingent upon the approval of all member states. The summit should be convened by any number of members and its first decision should be to invite Egypt to attend, the radio added.

As for current Libyan-Syrian contacts, JANA said that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's message delivered to President al-Asad on 1 January was concerned with the "gaps" facing Palestinian action. Earlier, in remarks to Palestinian students reported by JANA, Al-Qadhdhafi called for a "new rebellion" in Palestinian ranks and for the abolition of all the "traditional" Palestinian leaderships, asserting that the Palestinian situation is bad because of the "vacancy" in the Palestinian leadership which has not been filled since Yasir 'Arafat "pulled out" of the resistance.

Afghanistan

Soviet planes inadvertently bombed one of their own military convoys in the Herat region recently, destroying eight vehicles and killing "many" soldiers, according to a report from Afghanistan cited by Karachi radio.

Western Sahara

An SDAR communique reported by Algiers radio claimed that Polisario forces killed or wounded 120 Moroccan troops in the Western Sahara during an attack launched on 31 December.

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Najibollah, Others Address Tribal Assembly

LD022013 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] A glorious tribal assembly of the country's fraternal nationalities was held today in the conference hall of the state information services to mark the 20th founding anniversary of the PDPA. The meeting was attended by Najibollah, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and head of the state information services. A BAKHTAR correspondent reports that Najibollah said: [announcer-read] It is gratifying that all of us are gathered today to exchange views. Our freedom-loving and courageous people during the past centuries and many thousands of years of history, have have stood against oppression, despotism and barbarism many times. History is a witness to the uprising of our people against oppressive rulers and despots [words indistinct]; finally, by creating the PDPA, the party of the working class and all workers of the country, whose 20th glorious anniversary is being marked today, they made the April revolution victorious.

Najibollah then spoke in detail about the April revolution and its gains. He said: Representatives, chiefs and elders of the country's fraternal nationalities: Let us accomplish our religious and conscientious duty vis-a-vis those who fell prey to deception and have left their homeland, and once again invite them to return to their indigenous homeland, to work and struggle for the construction of a new, developed and blossoming Afghanistan, which is only the lofty aspiration of the PDPA.

The BAKHTAR correspondent adds that Bazowan Shenwari then spoke on behalf of the participants of the assembly, congratulating the party Central Committee and Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and president of the DRA Revolutionary Council, on the 20th founding anniversary of the PDPA. He pledged full cooperation with the revolutionary party and government in the construction of a new and blossoming society.

The correspondent adds that the assembly was also attended by Bariq Shafi, member of the PDPA Central Committee and vice chairman of the NFF Central Council; Mohammad 'Awaz Nabizada, candidate member of the PDPA Central Committee and deputy minister of the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs.

The assembly ended after offering prayers for the progress and development of the beloved homeland under the leadership of the revolutionary party and government.

Communications Minister Opens TV Transmitter

LD030304 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Nangarhar Province television [transmitting station] was opened in a ceremony today by Aslam Watanjar, PDPA Central Committee Politburo member and minister of communication.

At the ceremony Aslam Watanjar conveyed best wishes and sincere greetings from the PDPA, the party Politburo, and Babrak Karmal, PDPA Central Committee general secretary and DRA Revolutionary Council president, to the people of this region and congratulated the workers of Nangarhar on the opening of the television station.

He added: Reaction and imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism, are attempting to create barriers on the path of our country's — revolutionary Afghanistan's — progress and development. However, despite reaction and imperialism's resistance, our toiling people, under the leadership of the PDPA, continuously forge ahead and pass further on the road to progress.

Aslam Watanjar added: The introduction of Nangarhar television, which is evidence of other fundamental transformations and enormous progress, is another proof for our claim.

A relevant source said this station is one of eight given to the DRA through the free-of-charge assistance of the friendly country, the USSR.

The television unit of Nangarhar is equipped with the most modern machinery.

The ceremony was attended by members of the Nangarhar provincial party committee, sarandoy and 11th Division commanders' cadres, and party activists, government department staffs, officials and National Fatherland Front members, social organizations, and the working people of Jalalabad City.

According to another report, Aslam Watanajar, accompanied by the head of the Eastern Zone, provincial party committee secretary and Nangarhar Province governor, this afternoon visited the graveyard of the martyrs of the revolutionary path and laid a wreath there after offering prayers.

Soviet Planes Said To Bomb Own Convoy

BK030551 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] According to a report received from Afghanistan, Soviet planes inadvertently bombed one of their own military convoys in the Herat region recently, destroying eight military vehicles and killing many soldiers. According to another report, there have been three clashes between Soviet-Karmal troops and mujahidin around Herat city.

IRNA Reports Attack on Soviet Bases in Kabul

LD021427 Tehran IRNA in English 1344 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] New Delhi, Jan. 2, IRNA — On the fifth anniversary of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, mujahidin resistance forces attacked various government and Soviet bases in Kabul this week, according to reliable sources here.

Soviet airlifts to and from the Afghan capital have reportedly risen, indicating an increase in the number of dead soldiers being flown back to the Soviet Union and an upsurge in the number of troops coming in.

In the attack, the mujahidin killed and or wounded an unknown number of government officials when they hit a center for intelligence gathering in the capital.

Kabul, Panjsher Operations

LD021742 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Simultaneous with the beginning of the 6th anniversary of Afghanistan's occupation by Soviet military forces, Afghan Muslim revolutionaries carried out large-scale operations against joint Soviet and government military bases in Kabul during the past few days.

According to a report reaching us from inside Afghanistan, during the same period flights to the USSR by occupation forces'aircraft transporting the bodies of those killed and wounded in Afghanistan increased; in return, a number of fresh Soviet forces are arriving daily in Afghanistan.

The same report says that during the past week Afghan Muslim revolutionaries attacked the assembly point of a group of the members of the espionage organization of the regime ruling Afghanistan in the center of Kabul and inflicted appreciable damage to the building concerned. So far we have received no report on the number of the casualties incurred as a result of that attack.

On the other hand, in battles between Afghan Muslim revolutionaries and the joint forces of Soviet occupation and Karmal's regime during the past month in the Panjsher valley, in addition to the destruction of 14 personnel transport trucks, 5 helicopters and 2 fighter aircraft of the occupation force, and 456 men of the joint forces were killed.

Reports reaching us also say that during these battles large numbers of light and semi-heavy weapons were captured by the Afghan Muslim revolutionaries. At the same time, the latest reports reaching us speak of new clashes between the Afghan Muslim revolutionaries and the occupation forces in the regions north of Kabul and in that country's eastern provinces. So far we have received no reports on the details of these clashes.

MSZMP Congratulates PDPA on Anniversary

LD021836 Budapest MTI in English 1720 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Budapest, January 2 (MTI) — The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Central Committee has sent a telegram of congratulations to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan Central Committee on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the party.

Former Afghan King Attempts To Pressure USSR

GF021330 Karachi MASHRIQ in Urdu 29 Dec 84 p 1

[Text] Rome, 28 Dec: The former king of Afghanistan, Muhammad Zahir Shah, has put pressure on the Soviet Union to agree to hold talks on the Afghanistan question in response to the resolutions passed in the United Nations. In his message on the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he said that the Soviet Union agrees to a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan problem only verbally, but in actual fact it has stepped up its intervention in the country. He said if the Soviet Union plays a positive role in the Afghan question, it is certain that it will help in resolving the issue. He added that direct talks between the parties concerned and the representatives of the Afghan people would help in finding a solution.

AFP: Indian Border Guards Fire on Village

HK020616 Hong Kong AFP in English 0546 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Dhaka, Jan 2 (AFP) — Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) yesterday opened fire on a Bangladeshi border village, *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER* reported here today.

The Dhaka English daily quoted an official source as saying that "the unprovoked Indian firing," at the village of Belgachha Village in the western sub-district of Bangladesh, was not returned by the Bangladeshi side.

The report said that the incident took place after four Indian nationals "backed by BSF personnel" intruded into Bangladeshi territory at Belghachha village and tried to "forcibly take away cattle and goods" from the village.

The intruders escaped when the villages challenged them, the paper said.

But BSF troops later started firing with heavy guns and mortars the paper added.

Janadal Party Official on Possible Referendum

HK021336 Hong Kong AFP in English 0833 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Dhaka, Jan 2 (AFP) — The government-backed Janadal Party has said it might demand a referendum to see if Bangladeshis want a planned general election, which opposition parties have threatened to boycott, newspapers reported today.

If there is a boycott, the party would "insist on a referendum to ascertain people's wishes on the question of elections" newspapers quoted Amizanur Rahman Choudhury, the Janadal secretary general, as saying yesterday.

Janadal would also demand a referendum on various reform and development programmes of military ruler President Hussain Mohammed Ershad, the papers said, running an EASTERN NEWS AGENCY interview.

"Polls provide the best way to restoration of democracy in the country," Mr Choudhury said.

The Janadal Party was floated in November 1983 with the support of President Ershad, whose Cabinet of 27 ministers includes at least 16 Janadal leaders.

Lieutenant-General Ershad last month proposed a phased withdrawal of martial law and set the first half of April for holding the parliamentary poll.

It was the third time that the military ruler had announced a general election to return the country to civilian rule.

He was forced to cancel the first two in the face of opposition threats to boycott them.

The country's two major opposition groups, the 15- and seven-party alliances, as well as the rightwing Jamat-E-Islami Party, have consistently refused to go to the polls while martial law remains in force.

Their initial reaction to the April proposal was to boycott it also, as it would not [be] "free and fair."

But the president later agreed to their demand that all Janadal ministers must resign before the poll if they wish to seek reelection. Mr Choudhury confirmed they would do so.

"Janadal is ready to make any sacrifice to prepare the grounds for holding the elections and restoration of democracy," he said.

President Ershad has said he is determined to go ahead with the election.

The government yesterday promised the elections would be fair and urged the opposition to say it would take part.

Lt. Gen. Ershad announced on December 31 the abolition of the posts and offices of district and zonal martial law courts and of some special military tribunals, in line with his promise to slowly lift martial law.

Minister Discusses Trade With Soviet Envoy

BK300248 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0110 GMT 30 Dec 84

[Text] The Soviet ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr V.G. Belyayev, called on the commerce minister, Prof M.A. Matin, in Dhaka yesterday. They discussed matters of bilateral interest with particular reference to the implementation of the latest barter protocol signed between the two countries.

Gandhi Summons Sri Lankan Envoy to New Delhi

HK020738 Hong Kong AFP in English 0717 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Colombo, Jan 2 (AFP) — India's envoy in Sri Lanka is to fly to New Delhi today for urgent talks on the island's ethnic crisis, after a summons from Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, diplomatic sources here said.

Indian High Commission sources here confirmed that Commissioner J.S. Chatwal would leave for India today and that he would be away for at least a week.

The summons so soon after the appointment of the new Indian cabinet on Monday underlines the importance Mr Gandhi puts on the Tamil separatist issue, the diplomatic sources said.

Mr Gandhi, who is also foreign minister, said after his sweeping general election victory last week that he would review the situation in Sri Lanka, where efforts by Sri Lankan groups to solve the crisis broke down last month.

A total of 409 people have been killed in Sri Lanka since November 19 by official count, as troops battled separatists seeking to set up a state in the north of the island free of domination by the country's Sinhalese majority.

(There is considerable sympathy for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority in India's Tamil Nadu state, dominated by Tamils, observers say.)

Analysts here say Colombo fears intervention by India in the crisis.

The consultations come at a time when India-Sri Lanka relations have sunk to their lowest since the two countries gained independence from Britain 37 years ago.

Diplomats here also expect President Junius Jayewardene to send a special envoy to New Delhi for discussions with Mr Gandhi in a fence-mending exercise.

Observers here expect Mr Jayewardene to pick National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali as envoy, a role he has played before when Mr Gandhi's mother, Indira, held the dual roles of prime minister and foreign minister.

Mr Athulathmudali was also spokesman for a national round-table conference of Sri Lankan political parties and ethnic and religious groups, which tried to find a solution to the ethnic conflict.

But the work of the year-long conference was scuttled when the cabinet dropped its proposals for more regional autonomy in the face of strong opposition from the major Tamil party and Sinhalese groups.

India is anxious to get the talks moving again, diplomatic sources said. New Delhi wants a speedy political settlement because of pressure that Tamils in Tamil Nadu are exerting on behalf of their ethnic relatives across the Palk Strait.

Colombo has said several leaders of militant separatist groups have sought refuge in Tamil Nadu and have operational headquarters there.

Sri Lanka also says its has provided New Delhi with evidence of combat training camps for separatists in Tamil Nadu.

India has consistently denied the charges but Sri Lanka insists that New Delhi is turning a "blind eye."

Separatist violence could be contained if Tamil Nadu did not provide a rear base to which militants can escape after operations here, Colombo says.

Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed had a sharp exchange of words last month with India accusing the security forces here of "indiscriminate killings" and of harassing Indian fishermen.

Mr Hameed said India's claim to support Sri Lanka's sovereignty and unity was a "standing mockery."

Observers here believe that both Indira Gandhi and her son refused to crack down on separatist activity in Tamil Nadu because of domestic political pressure. But now that his election victory has freed Mr Gandhi from alliances with regional parties, he should be able to pursue his own policies, they say.

Mr Gandhi and his envoy are expected to discuss how to revive the political process here, now that there is opposition to anything more than district councils with limited powers as instruments of autonomy in Tamil areas. Mr Gandhi was congratulated on his election victory by both President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa. (In New Delhi, an Indian foreign office spokesman said Mr Chatwal would arrive here later this week for consultations on the Sri Lankan situation with Mr Gandhi and Foreign Ministry officials.)

Envoy To Brief Parthasarathy

BK030924 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] The Indian high commissioner to Sri Lanka, Mr J.S. Chatwal, had a meeting with the Tamil Nadu finance minister, Mr Neduchezhiyan, in Madras today on his way to Delhi. Mr Neduchezhiyan told newsmen that Mr Chatwal will meet the chairman of the Foreign Policy Planning Committee, Mr G. Parthasarathy, and apprise him of the condition of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Gandhi Reviews Steps for Industrial Development

BK021602 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who also holds the Industry portfolio, today reviewed the various measures taken by the ministry to promote industrial development in the country. The minister of state for Industry, Mr Arif Mohammad Khan, and the three secretaries in the ministry were present at the

meeting which lasted nearly 2 hours. Mr Gandhi evinced special attention to the system of industrial approval, modernization, and upgradation of technology, promotion of the small-scale sector, and development of backward areas. He underlined the need for expeditious implementation of various programs to achieve speedy growth.

Janata Party Leader Calls for Election Inquiry

HK021244 Hong Kong AFP in English 1218 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] New Delhi, Jan 2 (AFP) — A prominent opposition leader today demanded a judicial commission to enquire into complaints of "large scale" rigging in last week's general election, starting with the prime minister's constituency.

The former ruling Janata Party leader, Ramkrishna Hegde, told the press here that a commission of enquiry alone could establish the credentials of Rajiv Gandhi's "clean" image.

Mr Hegde, who headed a Janata Party government in southern Karnataka state from January 1982 till last week, when he resigned following his party's poor showing in the election, said in the last two days he had received "incredible" reports of ballot boxes being changed while in transit in trucks.

His party got only four of the 28 seats from the state against 24 for congress.

The number of votes counted in Mr Gandhi's constituency was larger than the number recorded at polling booths, he alleged.

Only about 10 percent of the candidates fielded by India's six national opposition parties — the Janata, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP), the Congress (s), The Communist Party of India (CPI) and CPI (Marxist), managed to avoid defeat from a pro-Congress wave.

The Congress (I) won an unprecedented victory, taking 400 of 507 seats declared so far in last week's poll, with one result still to be announced.

The Janata Party, which ruled the country from 1977 to 1979 and had 21 deputies in the outgoing lower house of Parliament, contested 207 seats but won only 10.

The Janata leader said unless elections were fought on the basis of equal facilities they could not be called fair.

For instance, he pointed out, the use of Air Force planes and helicopters by the prime minister gave him an "incomparably vast" advantage. Mr Gandhi was able to cover practically all the 500-odd constituencies whereas no leader in the opposition could finish even one tenth of them, he said.

The "vulgar display" of resources by Congress candidates in terms of both publicity material and vehicles was also "unparalleled," he charged.

Mr Hegde also alleged that the way the mass media was "misused and abused" surpassed all "previous records."

The election commission last week rejected a petition from Menaka Gandhi, widow of Rajiv's younger brother Sanjay, to suspend counting of votes in the Amethi constituency of Uttar Pradesh where she was running against Mr. Gandhi.

The commission spokesman then said Mrs. Gandhi's accusations of fraud had been too general to warrant suspension of counting.

Mrs. Gandhi, who heads her own party, Rashtriya Sanjay Manch (RSM), lost her deposit as she fialed to secure 10 percent of the votes polled by the winning candidate. Mr Gandhi won 314,878 votes.

Early Elections Sought

BK011631 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 1 Jan 85

[Text] The Karnataka chief minister, Mr Ramkrishna Hegde, has demanded elections to the state assembly earlier. In an interview with PTI, he said he has declined to be the caretaker chief minister of the state and did not mind president's rule.

Mr Hegde, who has resigned following his party's debacle in the recent election, said that the unity exercises among opposition parties did not yield result. Opposition parties should instead come together to fight on issues on which they have almost the same views.

Referring to the rout of the opposition in the recent elections, he said the theory of a coalition government at the center did not find conviction with the pepole. The people felt that if the opposition parties could not come together even on seat adjustments, how could they unite to form a government.

Governor Dissolves Karnataka State Assembly

BK030514 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] The Karnataka assembly has been dissolved by the governor, Mr Nanerjee. This followed the recommendation of the chief minister, Mr Ramkrishna Hegde. Quoting Raj Bhawan [governor's house] sources, our Bangalre correspondent reports that the chief minister is scheduled to meet the governor today. Mr Hegde had expressed his inability to continue in the caretaker government. However, this will be known after his meeting with the governor.

The Congress-I opposition leader in the dissolved assembly, Mr Virappa Moili, has welcomed the governor's action. He said his party is prepared to face the poll.

10 'Extremists,' 2 Policemen Killed in Bihar

BK030526 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] In Bihar, 10 extremists and 2 policemen were killed in an exchange of fire at Kayti village in Aurangabad District. The inspector general of police, Patna Zone, Mr Sahai, told our

correspondent that two policemen were also seriously injured. Encounter took place on Monday last, when armed extremists raided the village and opened fire, killing one policeman. Police reinforcement was rushed to the spot, and in the firing that followed 10 extremists and 1 policeman were killed. Police recovered three rifles and a large number of live cartridges from the extremists.

58 Tamil Refugees Arrive From Sri Lanka

BK030529 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] Fifty-eight Tamils, including women and children, who fled Sri Lanka arrived in Nagappattinam harbor yesterday. The refugees are fishermen and were living in the northern province of Sri Lanka. They left their homes fearing torture and indiscriminate killings by the Sri Lankan Army. Revenue authorities in Nagappattinam are making arrangements to send the refugees to camps.

Military Supplies May Be Offered to Gulf States

BK270147 Madras THE HINDU in English 13 Dec 84 p 5

[By Sashi Kumar]

[Text] Bahrain, Dec. 12 — There are indications that the Indian Government has been discreetly bidding for attention in the Gulf States as a potential arms supplier to the region, where self-defence and military deterrence have become an obsessive concern with no end in sight to the Iran-Iraq war.

According to knowledgeable sources a high-level decision has been taken in New Delhi to sound the Gulf Governments on the prospect, but with elections intervening, the idea would apparently be shelved pending the new Government taking office at home.

The two-pronged thrust of the scheme seems to be to find a market in this area for defence software manufactured in India and to seek parity with Pakistan in terms of para-military presence in some of these States. The probable list of defence items that could be exported to the region is not of a critical nature and includes tents, blankets and socks, the only hardware piece mentioned being the Vijayanta tank manufactured at the Avadi factory near Madras. New Delhi may also offer the services of civilian technical experts to help the fledgeling indigenous defence production in these states.

While no formal suggestion or offer has been made, initial reaction from here to the idea seems to be uncertain and equivocal, partly due to logistical compulsions. While the Gulf States have been crying hoarse against big power military intervention, they continue to be West-oriented for their part-real-part-psychological defence needs. The U.S., Britain and France who among them presently command the market here are, on their part, separately pressuring these governments to standardise on their weaponry and defence equipment since backup facilities would, it is being pointed out, otherwise become difficult. As yet only Kuwait has any substantial defence dealings with the Soviet Union, although the United Arab Emirates has recently shown some interest in diversification by pulling Moscow also into the fray.

The rapid deployment force decision taken at the GCC heads of State summit late last month would really seem an attempt at injecting some nationalistic pride into the defence structure of the member states, because such a force — the only difference being the Americans call it the rapid reaction force — seems already effectively at hand through the strong U.S. military presence in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

The Americans have been plumping for an undisputed role in the region and have been consistently advancing the 'standardisation' logic and argument. However, they have also been wary of making the zone a powder keg they themselves could lose control of and have been selective in the type of arms they offer.

The Indian interest in this sensitive area stems largely from the inroads Pakistan has made in the defence network, mainly in terms of personnel and at the advisory level in the defence services. While Pakistan has been trying to cash in on the Islamic fraternity slogan, many of the Gulf States are careful about entertaining their solicitations beyond a point.

Karachi Resolution on Stranded Biharis Cited

BK021720 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] In Pakistan, the 256-member Karachi municipality has unanimously passed a resolution demanding immediate repatriation of the Biharis stranded in Bangladesh. The resolution also condemned President Ziaul Haq's alleged derogatory remarks about repatriation of the Biharis. The remarks sparked off violent clashes in Karachi city killing at least six people, including a policeman.

PRC Deputy Chief of General Staff in Rawalpindi

BK021445 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 1 Jan 85

[Text] The Chinese deputy chief of the General Staff, He Zhengwen, met the Pakistani vice chief of the army staff, Mr Khalid Mahmud Arif, in Rawalpindi today and exchanged views with him on matters of mutual interest. Gifts were also exchanged on the occasion. The Chinese deputy chief of General Staff visited Corps headquarters and the electrical and mechanical engineering college in Rawalpindi.

NEPAL

AFP Examines Opposition in Legislature

HK030612 Hong Kong AFP in English 0555 GMT 3 jan 85

[By Kedar Man Singh]

[Text] Kathmandu, Jan 3 (AFP) — Opposition burgeoning within Nepal's partyless legislature is set to challenge Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand this year despite plentiful harvests and booming exports.

A billion-dollar bank loan scandal and lingering discontent over a September cabinet shuffle have reinvigorated opposition to Mr Chand's 18-month rule in and out of the national Panchayat, or legislature.

The Panchayat ban on partisan political activity began to rupture last year as former Premier Surya Bahadur Thapa and 35 supporters traveled about the mountain kingdom speaking against Mr Chand.

The premier also faced challenges from the banned Congress Party, which held a series of meeting throughout the country, and 65,000 teachers who struck for higher pay.

Mr Thapa, who was toppled by Mr Chand in 1983 Panchayat elections, told audiences that the prime minister and his supporters had "undermined the Constitution and terrorised the people."

Within the Panchayat, a second opposition grouping of 76 legislators formed around Shribhadra Sharma, a former government minister and erstwhile leader of the Nepali congress.

Members of the group had helped Mr Chand defeat a July no-confidence vote but were angered by a September cabinet shuffle that failed to dispel charges of government corruption and abuse of authority.

Political observers here predicted that an alliance between Mr Thapa and Mr Sharma could threaten the government at the Panchayat's June budget meeting.

Mr Chand's supporters have credited him with an improvement in last year's trade balance and a bumper harvest of 4.2 million metric tons.

Nepal's exports for the 12-month period ending in July were up 52.2 per cent while imports grew by only 4.5 per cent. The export surge trimmed Nepal's trade deficit by 5.9 per cent to 4.874 billion rupees (330 million dollars at current rates) [figures as received]. An official said government export incentives were the main reason for the improved trade balance. He also said substantial irrigation improvements had boosted rice production.

Mr Chand's image has nonetheless been tarnished by his handling of allegations that officers of the central bank seeking a billion-dollar low-interest loan abroad attempted to embezzle the bank's funds.

Summoned by the Panchayat finance committee to answer questions about the proposal, the prime miniser issued a statement that explained the deal and denied it had cost the country money.

The summary dismissal of Rastra Bank Governor Kalyan Bikram Adhikari three weeks ago failed to still the controversy. But finance committee moves to censure Mr Chand's refusal to answer the summons were blocked when he secured the support of half its 30 members.

The government also faces opposition from 62,000 teachers who struck briefly last month for hefty pay hikes to put their salaries on a par with the civil service. Sixty teachers were arrested and the Nepal teachers association has threatened to mount a non-cooperation movement that would include refusing to open the schools as polling places during elections.The action coincides with a non-cooperation movement already launched by Nepali Congress leaders, including acting President Krishna Prasad Bhattrai.

Despite a government ban, the congress this year convened meetings to demand the restoration of parliamentary government, which was dissolved in December 1960. Leftist parties, including the communists, are discussing the formation of an alliance to contest in the general elections scheduled for May 1986.

SRI LANKA

Cabinet Discusses 1 Jan Attack on Railway Line

BK031053 Colombo International Service in English 1030 GMT 3 Jan 85

[Text] The Cabinet of ministers at their weekly meeting yesterday reviewed the reports of the blasting of the railway track in the north in the early hours of 1 January. The Cabinet noted that the terrorists appeared to want to cut off food supplies and other necessities for their own people in the Jaffna peninsula. This was disclosed by the minister of state and Cabinet spokesman, Dr Anandatissa de Alwis. Dr de Alwis said that there was no further information about the two missing inspectors of police. Rumors about their whereabouts have been investigated, but they have all led to false (?trails). He noted that this was characteristic in all cases where people have been abducted.

Athulathmudali: Army Not Forced To Quit Jaffna

BK011113 Colombo International Service in English 1030 GMT 1 Jan 85

[Text] Minister Athulathmudali told the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation this morning that the recent statements by the terrorists that they would ensure the withdrawal of government troops from Jaffna before the end of December has (?today) been a failure. He said that the government forces have the courage and strength to deal with any terrorist activity.

Meanwhile, the wives of the two abducted police officers met Mr Athulathmudali yesterday to present their views with regard to the release of their husbands.

President Khamene'i Briefed on Defense Industries

LD011804 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 1 Jan 85

[Text] This morning the managing director and chairman of the board of directors of the Defense Industries Organization, together with the Defense Ministry's technical adviser, met Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, president of the Republic and chairman of the Supreme Defense Council. During the meeting, a report was presented to the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council on the situation in the Defense Industries Organization, on the progress in defense and military research, and on the latest information concerning the manufacture of military weapons and ammunition. Mr Khamene'i agreed that the organization made maximum use of experienced individuals, managers, and specialists. He also talked about the setting up of the Office of Strategic Studies.

Prime Minister Opens Seminar on Tax Collection

LD021533 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] The seminar on the issues about tax collection from the professions and the use of those taxes in the areas where they have been collected started today in Tehran. Participating in the seminar are the prime minister, a number of ministers, Majlis deputies, officials from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the plan and budget organization, and the governors general from all over the country.

In this seminar, Prime Minister Mr Hoseyn Musavi-Khamene'i expressed his hope that the exchanges of views and discussions in this seminar would lead to new ways and efforts to find new sources of income apart from the income received from the sale of oil. He said: The step that we must take in the economic sphere is to find ways of preventing the influences and fluctuations of the world economy upon our economy. This can be achieved by making use of other income and revenue without relying upon the oil income.

The prime minister added: What is happening in the Persian Gulf with the support of the superpowers shows that they are not going to stop influencing our economy and our policies. If we rely only upon our oil income we will be vulnerable. So long as we are not able to rely upon diverse sources of income, we will not be able to achieve complete independence and self-sufficiency. If we wish to continue the direction of our Islamic Revolution, and if we wish to remain committed to the fate of the oppressed people of the world, we should eliminate our vulnerable points, although they will continue to exert pressure upon us unless we compromise and give up our exalted aspirations.

The prime minister said: In order to continue the direction of our Islamic movement, we should solve our economic problems. The superpowers pay a great deal of attention to our economic affairs. They pay attention to the fluctuations in our economy and exaggerate them. For instance, they put out a lot of propaganda concerning the distribution of goods and constantly talk about inflation in Iran, although they make no reference to their friendly countries which, although they are not engaged in a war like us, have, nevertheless, an inflation rate many times that of ours. With our faith and with our revolutionary patience we will correct those areas where they think we are vulnerable.

In order to safeguard our national security and to protect our Islamic Revolution we should become self-reliant in economic fields and we should be free from the influences of economic fluctuations outside our country. This is one of the principles of our policy, and if we show any slackness in this regard,foreign conspiracies will exploit these fluctuations and make them the means for the suppression of the revolution. Thinking about economic affairs is an important matter on which the fate of the revolution depends. We cannot propagate the values of the Islamic Revolution while we do not have a completely self-reliant and independent economy.

The prime minister then referred to the oil price fluctuations and said: If in the past year the fluctuations in the price of oil affected some of our economic programs it was due to the influence of the fluctuations of foreign economies upon our economy as well as our economy's reliance upon oil. One of the ways to make ourselves less vulnerable is to make use of tax revenue.

Referring to the historical background for the nonpayment of taxes, he said: For many years in our culture paying taxes was regarded as providing assistance to a tyrannical and oppressive government. However, today the direction of our system has been made clear to our people, and this old attitude should be changed. We should have an economy that is dependent upon itself. We do not claim that we should not use oil revenues; we will continue to make economic and political use of this vital asset, both in our own interests and in the interests of the oppressed people of the world. Today oil is basically one of the political weapons, but we will not make our destiny dependent upon it. This is why we will be moving towards eliminating our economy's dependence upon a single product.

The prime minister added: I believe the people do not yet appreciate the connection between tax collection and the development of various areas. If people appreciate this point we will no longer be faced with their refusal to pay taxes and we will witness wide-scale popular cooperation. He added: We should have various methods to attract taxes. We place numerous services at the disposal of the people. Therefore, we should collect taxes for those services. We should make people realize that if they wish to make use of the facilities provided by the state, they should also pay their costs. It is important that those who make greater use of those facilities pay more taxes. The payment of taxes is one of the ways for eliminating the gap between the rich and the oppressed.

He then referred to the big difference existing between the payment of taxes by government employees and those employed in private professions and said: The statistics show that in the past few months [as heard] more than 51 billion rials of taxes were collected from the salaries of government employees; while the equivalent figure for those in private professions has been 16 billion rials. This cannot be tolerated under any circumstances, and the movement which has been started is aimed at creating greater justice in the collection of those taxes. In this country the

oppressed strata pay their taxes — both in the form of direct and indirect taxes — while some other people refrain from paying their proper taxes.

He then said: For years the payment of taxes and tributes have been regarded as incorrect activities. However, our society should now accept the fact that the situation is different. While changing this cultural attitude, we should also change the means which exist for tax collection. People should learn that payment of taxes is a duty and that nonpayment of taxes is an offence.

The prime minister then referred to the need for coordination between various organizations to improve the methods for tax collection and said: One can make use of the assistance of the clergymen, the governors general and other government officials. The directors general of the departments of economic affairs and finance of various provinces should discuss with others their activities and advance economic affairs through complete coordination. People should feel that the taxes that they pay will be spent on them and will satisfy their needs. People's motivation for the payment of taxes should be increased. When people notice the connection between the payment of taxes and the implementation of productive and development projects, they will willingly pay their taxes.

The prime minister added: I think it is probable that in the first year of implementing this new tax law we will face some difficulties. However, if we do not accept these difficulties, we will in the future be faced with greater hardships.

At the end of his speech, the prime minister expressed his hope that the seminar will be successful in its work.

Cabinet To Review Oil Exports After OPEC Talks

LD021451 Tehran IRNA in English 1301 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 2, IRNA — The Cabinet decided Wednesday to review its oil exporting policy in a future meeting after it heard a report by the oil minister Mohammad Gharazi on the recent meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The cabinet meet, headed by Prime Minister Hoseyn Musavi also discussed domestic and regional issues.

OPEC ministers decided last week to hold their production and price quotas and to create a committee for monitoring the implementation of its policies by member countries.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Replies to Velayati

LD021721 Tehran IRNA in English 1539 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Kuwait, Jan. 2, IRNA — The Iranian charge d'affaires to Kuwait, Mohammed Baqeri, in a meeting with the Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, Shaykh Sabah al-Jabir al-Sabah, here this morning presented a written message of the Iranian foreign affairs minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

The message is in reply to the message of Kuwaiti foreign affairs minister to Velayati, thanking him for the efforts made to bring the issue of the hijacking Kuwaiti airplane to an end.

During the meeting, issues related to mutual relations and the latest developments in the Iraqi imposed war were discussed. Both sides stressed the need for efforts to counter imperialism and international Zionism's sowing of discord among Muslims. They also emphasised the need for further expansion of mutual relations.

Another issue discussed was the status of Iranians residing in Kuwait and the teachers of the Iranian schools in particular.

Speaking after the meeting, Baqeri told IRNA that the Kuwaiti foreign minister promised to take measures to remove restriction from Iranians in Kuwait especially the teachers.

Ayatollah Montazeri Addresses Military Leaders

LD021531 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Excerpts] The commanders of independent divisions, brigades, and officials from the cultural and educational centers and logistic units of the Ground Forces, accompanied by Ground Forces commander Colonel Sayyad-Shirazi, met yesterday with the grand Ayatollah Montazeri.

The grand Ayatollah Montazeri said: The dear military brothers are well aware of the international situation of the revolution and the positions adopted against it by the East and West. Today, a former American President openly says: Only Islam poses a danger to our interests, not Marxism. You have no doubt also been informed that a conference was recently convened in Israel in which experts and so-called Islamic scholars from America and Israel participated to study the main secret of the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran; so that, in their view, they can stop the danger of the Islamic revolution spreading throughout the world.

In this way, it is quite clear that the enemies of Islam will do all in their power to weaken the revolution, distort its features in the world, and strengthen its enemies. At the moment, they have pinned all their hopes upon Saddam; this is why we see that, despite all the contradictions which exist in the colonial interests of East and West, both of them have nevertheless become united in strengthening and supporting Saddam.

He emphasized: Under conditions when our self-sacrificing nation is demonstrating so much devotion and, despite all the existing short-comings and difficulties keep the fronts and the hinterland active and warm, we expect the Armed Forces to strengthen complete coordination among themselves and improve their fighting capability. The dear brothers at the fronts should not spend all their time chanting slogans and such things. They should try to welcome those who have a war plan and war theories, and should prepare the ground for developing views and presenting projects by various minds. They should know that worship is not limited to formal prayers; but the fact that the brothers from the Armed Forces, the Guards Corps, the mobili-

zation units and the Gendarmerie sit together and think together about the issues of the war and the fronts and present new plans; for instance, increasing the level of military education and training in others would be the best form of worship and the most meritorious deed in the sight of God.

In conclusion, he provided some guidelines on the main duties of the Armed Forces and the Guards Corps based on the constitution and the role of the great mobilization forces in the future.

Armed Forces Joint Staff Communique No 1,960

LD021704 Tehran IRNA in English 1620 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 2, IRNA — Iran's Muslim combatants bombarded Iraqi troop concentration sites and supply routes in the western front Tuesday, destroying one truck and its personnel as well as 12 weaponry positions and observation posts.

Joint Staff Command Communique Number 1960 said Wednesday that Iranian combatants in the same area, continued sending patrol units who controlled enemy movements.

In the northwestern front, Iran's Muslim troops completed their defensive positions and silenced enemy guns by raining fire on them, killing and wounding a number of Iraqi soldiers.

In the cross fire in the vicinity of the Arvand River, five Iraqi group bunkers and one mortar launcher were destroyed.

The port city of Abadan came under Iraqi mortar fire Tuesday damaging six houses.

Joint Staff Chief Briefs Foreign Attaches on War

LD021714 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Military attaches from foreign embassies in Tehran went this morning to the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces Joint Staff headquarters, meeting and talking with Colonel Sohrabi, chief of the Joint Staff. During the meeting the chief of the joint staff, welcoming and congratulating them on the birthday of Jesus Christ — may peace be upon him — gave the military attaches a resume on the course of the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran. In conclusion, he called on those present to strive towards international peace and understanding.

Over $2 Billion Spent on Reconstruction

LD281850 Tehran IRNA in English 1812 GMT 28 Dec 84

[Text] Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchistan Pr., Dec. 28, IRNA — Interior Minister 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here today that ever since the out break of the Iraq-Iran war, the government has expended some 200 billion rials (dlrs 2.2 bn) for the reconstruction or repair of damaged cities and villages in the western and southern provinces of Iran.

This year's budget for this purpose would be six to ten billion rials (dlrs 652 mn to 1.1 bn).

He said people from all walks of life had also donated generous aids for the reconstruction effort, such as by the people in Mazandaran Province who contributed some 3.2 billion rials (dls. 34.8 mn).

They also sent some 13,000 volunteer people in various capacities for the reconstruction projects, he added.

The interior minister also lauded the efforts of all people involved in the task of narcotics control in Iran and noted that during the past two years, the Islamic revolution's committees alone had seized more than 100 tons of narcotics from traffickers, mainly in Sistan-Baluchistan Province.

Course of War, Future Iraqi Government Viewed

LD021437 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0740 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] One of the important and noteworthy points in the analysis of the imposed war is the existing realities inside Iraq and conditions among Muslim people. Although the wall raised by Zionist propaganda prevents news about popular movements and failures of Saddam's regime from leaking out, the little news that does get through promises the same thing that the Islamic Republic is ultimately seeking. What is meant here is that two points should be considered in connection with the fate of the war and Saddam's end.

The first point is the fall of the criminal Ba'thist regime, which will be achieved by the combatants of Islam with the help and support of the Divine Force, whereby the righteous soldiers of the army of Islam will guarantee the restoration of the violated rights of their nation.

The second point is the way the future Islamic Government of Iraq is to be ruled. For this the Muslim people of that country should rise and prepare themselves. So, it transpires that it is not just the fall of Saddam and his regime that would determine the end of the war; rather, guarding the victory gained inside Iraq is most important and should be done by the hands of the Muslim Iraqi people themselves.

Therefore, we can say that one of the reasons for the patience shown by the victorious combatants of Islam on the fronts, in addition to giving the opposition the chance to yield to what is right, is to give the Iraqi people the chance to deepen their struggle against the blasphemous Ba'thist regime, to strengthen their forces, to identify the capable and honest persons for the future Iraqi government and to get ready to run the future government of Iraq.

The significant experience gained as a result of the Islamic revolution of Iran shows that the Muslim revolutionaries of Iraq should prepare themselves for running the future government in such a way that the United States, the USSR, liberals, compromisers and hypocrites would not be able to deal a blow to the new government of Islamic Iraq from within. This is possible by carefully identifying enemy agents while fighting the savage Ba'thist regime, and would obviously need time and opportunity.

Thus, one can say that the Islamic combatants, while dominating the immobilized Ba'thist aggressors from the best strategic positions on the fronts, are waiting for the fruit of the Islamic revolution of Iraq to ripen in order to protect it from pests and worms later on.

It is quite clear therefore that the fall of the aggressive and Zionist regime of Ba'th is one thing, and the future government of Iraq is another. The first issue will be achieved by the righteous combatants of Islam with the help of the Iraqi people. The second issue is up to the Muslim people of Iraq. The Islamic Republic of Iran will obviously help them in this respect.

Seminar on Iraqi, Afghan Refugees Continues

LD021711 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] The second day of the seminar for reviewing the problems of Iraqi and Afghan refugees, which is investigating and discussing the refugees' problems and outlining the overall policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in that respect, was held at the Interior Ministry.

During the seminar, the political director general of the Foreign Ministry described the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in supporting the rightful struggles of the Muslim Afghan mujahidin and the plot by the oppressers to force the Islamic revolution of Afghanistan to compromise. He said: The Islamic Republic stands by and strongly believes in the four conditions it has set for solving the issue of Afghanistan. He added: The four conditions are: the unconditional evacuation of the Soviet occupying forces; nonreplacement of those forces with other oppresser forces; the honorable return of Afghan refugees to their country, and the determining of Afghanistan's fate by the Muslim people of that country.

An Interior Ministry official then described the general points relating to Afghan refugees and mujahidin at various levels. He reiterated Iran's comprehensive support for Afghan refugees and mujahidin. He called for decisive action against offenders and those Afghans who with their behavior disgrace the struggles of the Muslim people of that country.

Afghan Refugees Stage Anti-Soviet Demonstrations

LD301853 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Dec 84

[Text] The Afghan Muslim refugees residing in Iran are continuing their demonstrations and condemnation of the USSR for its occupation of Afghanistan. The Central News Unit reports that yesterday the Afghan Muslim nationals residing in Tabas staged a glorious march on the occasion of the anniversary of the Soviet troops' occupation of Afghanistan. Bearing portraits of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution and placards condemning the aggressors, the marchers assembled at the town's Jerusalem Square and continued shouting anti-American and anti-Soviet slogans. In a speech, an Afghan Muslim is reported to have referred to crimes committed by the Soviet troops against the Afghan people, adding that the Afghan revolutionaries are determined to continue their relentless battle until the collapse of the Karmal regime and the expulsion of the invading troops.

Iraq Executes Soldiers For Not Fighting Iran

LD021913 Tehran IRNA in English 1850 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Pr., Jan. 2, IRNA — The Ba'thist regime of Iraq has recently executed 300 more Muslim soldiers for having refused to fight the Islamic forces of Iran.

Reports reaching here said the soldiers were residents of Karbala and were hanged in the city's central square. Their bodies were left hanging for one day to intimidate the people.

Meanwhile, due to a shortage of soldiers, the combat units of the Iraqi Army has decreased from 35-men per company to only nine men.

The flight of Sudanese and Egyptian workers from Iraq has been increasing as well, because the regime is forcing them to participate in the war.

Beirut Rites Mark 'Arifi Detention Anniversary

LD021843 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jan 85

[Text] Special ceremonies were held yesterday in Huri mosque in the western sector of Beirut on the first anniversary of the Zionist forces' arrest of Shaykh Muharram 'Arifi, one the militant ulema of Sidon and the Al-Bitah Mosque prayers leader, and his continued internment in the detention center. According to the Central News Unit, these ceremonies, which were organized by the Muslim Ulema Association of Lebanon, were attended by a group of Lebanese clergymen, the charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Beirut, and a large group of Lebanese Muslims. During the ceremonies, various speakers emphasized that the war in south Lebanon is an Islamic jihad.

'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadhlullah, said in his speech: The Ansar detention center has been turned into a school for jihad; Islam rejects nationalism and tribalism because such issues create discord among Muslims and separate them from one another, and at this time, the unity of Muslims is a vital issue." In connection with the talks held between the Lebanese Government and the Zionist regime, he said: These talks have been held at the initiative and support of the United States, and the sole purpose of dispatching Murphy, Reagan's representative, to the region was to save the Zionist regime.

Commentary Examines Recent Gulf Tanker Attacks

GF301432 Tehran International Service in Arabic 0700 GMT 30 Dec 84

[Unattributed Commentary]

[Text] The Persian Gulf region recently witnessed an escalation in attacks on oil tankers, behind which are a series of significant

facts. Whenever the rulers of Iraq sense the Islamic Republic's military superiority, they (?face) this superiority by striking at oil tankers. This is because they firmly believe that the economic factor is one of the bases for this military superiority. In addition, there are many goals which the Baghdad regime and the forces [words indistinct] desire to achieve through attacking the tankers. Among these goals are the clouding of the atmosphere in the oil markets and the addition of a new factor of tension to the critical oil crisis. This is made especially clear since 7 to 8 million barrels of oil are exported daily from the Persian Gulf region, which is equivalent to half of all OPEC exports. Any tension surrounding these exports will reflect on the whole international oil market. This fact cannot be ignored in light of recent developments.

The attacks on tankers will increase the insurance costs and will force some companies to hesitate to resume their voyages through the Persian Gulf region in order to transport 8 million barrels of oil to the industrial world. This was made clear to everyone during the periods when the attacks on tankers escalated. Some oil companies actually stopped shipping movements after their ships were raided.

While [word indistinct] this crazy scenario, everyone is asking: Who is benefitting and who is being harmed by such acts? The benefactors are the masters of industry in the Western world who have been planning for a real crisis in the international oil markets for some time. They have done their best to revive this crisis and to start an oil price war in order to destabilize this trade, because its stability means steadiness of prices and calmness of the oil glut hurricane.

International arrogance also desires to create anxiety among the sides that produce oil because the concern for this wealth is a factor of tension in the oil markets, and also a significant factor for causing differences and splits within OPEC, and this is what the oil cartel — which controls all oil markets in the world — wants. Perhaps the OPEC countries sensed the existing and the expected threats and unified ranks in order to confront those threats. This phenomenon became very clear recently and the colonialist plots failed because OPEC remained united and cooperated in dealing with the problem. At the same time, the arrogant circles were in need of [word indistinct] to break this iron barrier that was formed by the OPEC countries in their search for a unanimous resolution of the problem. One option was for the ruling regime in Iraq to resume attacks on tankers in order to create a new crisis in the oil markets so that the crisis would extend to OPEC.

Those who have been provoking the oil problem for almost 2 years are responsible this time for the attacks on tankers. It does not matter to them who is harmed as a result of this policy; but, even if the arrogant circles believe they are removed from the harm caused by attacks on tankers, they too will be affected if the oil flow from the Persian Gulf region totally stops. This is very likely and should be in the minds of those who make plans as well as those concerned sides in the oil war.

On various occasions the Islamic Republic has stressed this fact, most recently through the warning of Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani who, on his part, affirmed the Islamic Republic's ability to resist this policy and take the crisis to the arrogant countries if these countries continue to conspire against the wealth of peoples.